

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A service device that sequentially provides a service in response to a service request from a client, the client being connected to the service device via a network, the service device comprising:

 a detection module that detects whether ~~or not~~ the service device is capable of providing a service and whether the service can be provided within a preset time period by the service device; and

 a notification module that notifies the client of the result of detection regardless of whether or not a request for information about whether or not the service device is capable of providing the service within the preset time period has been received from the client and regardless of whether or not the service request has been received from the client,

 wherein the detection module and the notification module are implemented as program instructions stored on a computer-readable medium or as a combination of hardware and program instructions stored on a computer-readable medium.

Claim 2 (Original): The service device in accordance with claim 1, wherein

 the notification module notifies the client of the result of detection when a change is detected between a state in which the service device is capable of providing a service within the preset time period and a state in which the service device is incapable of providing a service within the preset time period.

Claim 3 (Original): The service device in accordance with claim 1, wherein

 the detection module detects whether or not the service device is capable of providing a service in real time.

Claim 4 (Original): The service device in accordance with claim 1, further comprising:

 a setting module that registers the client as a target of notification,

 wherein the notification module notifies the registered client of the result of detection.

Claim 5 (Original): The service device in accordance with claim 4, further comprising:
a reception module that receives information from the client, the information relating to an attribute or type of a service required by the client,
wherein the setting module registers the client if the service device is capable of providing a service of the attribute or type.

Claim 6 (Original): The service device in accordance with claim 4, wherein
the setting module is capable of registering a plurality of the clients;
the setting module stores a use condition in connection with a specific client of the plurality of clients, the use condition being used for allowing the specific client to use the service device preferentially; and
when the use condition satisfied, the notification module further notifies the specific client of the satisfaction of the use condition.

Claim 7 (Original): The service device in accordance with claim 6, wherein
when the use condition satisfied, the notification module further notifies a client other than the specific client that the service device became incapable of providing a service.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): A method in a service device that sequentially provides a service in response to a service request from a client, the client being connected to the service device via a network, the method comprising the steps of:

detecting whether ~~or not~~ the service device is capable of providing a service and whether the service can be provided within a preset time period by the service device; and
notifying the client of the result of detection regardless of whether or not a request for information about whether or not the service device is capable of providing the service within the preset time period has been received from the client and regardless of whether or not the service request has been received from the client.

Claim 9 (Original): The method in accordance with claim 8, wherein
the notifying step includes:

notifying the client of the result of detection when a change is detected between a state in which the service device is capable of providing a service within the preset time period and a state in which the service device is incapable of providing a service within the preset time period.

Claim 10 (Original): The method in accordance with claim 8, wherein
the detecting step includes:

detecting whether or not the service device is capable of providing a service in real time.

Claim 11 (Original): The method in accordance with claim 8, further comprising:

registering the client as a target of notification,
wherein the notifying step includes:
notifying the registered client of the result of detection.

Claim 12 (Original): The method in accordance with claim 11, further comprising:

receiving information from the client, the information relating to an attribute or type of a service required by the client,
wherein the registering step includes:
registering the client if the service device is capable of providing a service of the attribute or type.

Claim 13 (Original): The method in accordance with claim 11, wherein

the registering step includes:
registering a plurality of the clients; and
registering a use condition in connection with a specific client of the plurality of clients, the use condition being used for allowing the specific client to use the service device preferentially, and
the method further comprises:
when the use condition satisfied, notifying the specific client of the satisfaction of the use condition.

Claim 14 (Original): The method in accordance with claim 13, further comprising:

when the use condition satisfied, notifying a client other than the specific client that the service device became incapable of providing a service.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): A client that issues a service request to a service device via a network, the service device sequentially providing a service, the client comprising:

a receive module that receives a result of detection from the service device regardless of whether or not a request for information about a status of the service device has been issued to the service device, the result of detection relating to whether ~~or not~~ the service device is capable of providing a service and whether the service can be provided within a preset time period by the service device; and

an acquaint module that acquaints a user of the client with the result of detection regardless of whether or not the request for information about the status of the service device has been issued to the service device and regardless of whether or not the service request has been received from the client,

wherein the receive module and the acquaint module are implemented as program instructions stored on a computer-readable medium or as a combination of hardware and program instructions stored on a computer-readable medium.

Claim 16 (Original): The client in accordance with claim 15, further comprising:

a transmit module that transmits registration information to the service device, the registration information being used for registering the client at the service device, so that the client receives the result of detection from the service device.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): In a service system including a service device that sequentially provides a service and a client that issues a service request to the service device via a network, a method for acquainting a user of the client with information regarding the service device, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) the service device detecting whether ~~or not~~ the service device is capable of providing a service and whether the service can be provided within a preset time period by the service device;

(b) the service device notifying the client of the result of detection, regardless of whether or not a request for information about whether or not the service device is capable of providing the service within the preset time period has been issued from the client to the service device and regardless of whether or not the service request has been received from the client; and

(c) the client acquainting the user with the result of detection, regardless of whether or not the request for information about whether or not the service device is capable of providing the service within the preset time period has been issued from the client to the service device.

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): A computer program product for causing a service device to notify a client of information, the service device sequentially providing a service in response to a service request from the client, the client being connected to the service device via a network, the computer program product comprising:

a computer readable recording medium; and

a computer program stored on the computer readable recording medium,

the computer program causing the service device to attain the functions of:

detecting whether ~~or not~~ the service device is capable of providing a service and whether the service can be provided within a preset time period by the service device; and

notifying the client of the result of detection, regardless of whether or not a request for information about whether or not the service device is capable of providing the service within the preset time period has been received from the client and regardless of whether or not the service request has been received from the client.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): A computer program product for causing a client to receive information from a service device, the client issuing a service request to the service device via a network, the service device sequentially providing a service, the computer program product comprising:

a computer readable recording medium; and

a computer program stored on the computer readable recording medium,

the computer program causing the client to attain the functions of:

receiving a result of detection from the service device regardless of whether or not a request for information about a status of the service device has been issued to the service device, the result of detection relating to whether ~~or not~~ the service device is capable of providing a service and whether the service can be provided within a preset time period by the service device; and

acquainting a user of the client with the result of detection, regardless of whether or not the request for information about a status of the service device has been issued to the service device and regardless of whether or not the service request has been received from the client.